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Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia methodology

Reference period February 2019

Released 8/07/2019

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Explanatory notes

Introduction

1 The statistics in this release were compiled from the Participation, Job Search and Mobility (PJS) survey conducted throughout Australia in February 2019, as a supplement to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS).

2 Information about survey design, scope, coverage and population benchmarks relevant to the monthly LFS, which also applies to supplementary surveys, can be found in the publication [Labour Force, Australia \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0) (cat. no. 6202.0).

Concepts, sources and methods

3 The conceptual frameworks used in the monthly LFS align closely with the standards and guidelines set out in Resolutions of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians. Descriptions of the underlying concepts and structure of Australia's labour force statistics, and the sources and methods used in compiling these estimates, are presented in [Labour](#)

[Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6102.0.55.001) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6102.0.55.001>) (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001).

Labour Force Survey scope

4 The scope of the LFS is restricted to persons aged 15 years and over and excludes the following persons:

- members of the permanent defence forces;
- certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, customarily excluded from the Census and estimated populations;
- short term overseas residents in Australia; and
- members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants).

Participation, job search and mobility scope

5 In addition to the LFS scope exclusions, PJSM also excludes students at boarding schools, patients in hospitals, residents of homes (e.g. retirement homes, homes for persons with disabilities), and inmates of prisons.

6 PJSM was conducted in both urban and rural areas in all states and territories, but excluded persons living in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Coverage

7 The estimates in this publication relate to persons included in the survey in February 2019. In the LFS, coverage rules are applied, which aim to ensure that each person is associated with only one dwelling, and hence has only one chance of selection in the survey. See [Labour Force, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0>) (cat. no. 6202.0) for more details.

Sample size

8 Supplementary surveys are not always conducted on the full LFS sample. Since August 1994 the sample for supplementary surveys has been restricted to no more than seven-eighths of the LFS sample.

9 This survey is fully based on the sample introduced after the 2016 Census of Population and Housing, using the Address Register as the sampling frame for unit selection. For more information, see the [Information Paper: Labour Force Survey Sample Design](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6269.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6269.0>) (cat. no. 6269.0)

Reliability of the estimates

10 Estimates in this publication are subject to sampling and non-sampling errors:

- Sampling error is the difference between the published estimate and the value that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey. For more information, see the Technical Note.
- Non-sampling errors are inaccuracies that occur because of imperfections in reporting by respondents and interviewers, and errors made in coding and processing data. These inaccuracies may occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or a sample. Every effort is made to reduce the non-sampling error to a minimum by careful design of questionnaires, intensive training and effective processing procedures.

Seasonality

11 The estimates are based on information collected in the survey month (February) and, due to seasonality, may not be representative of other months of the year.

12 To reduce the impact of seasonality on the different estimates of labour force status, the estimates have been adjusted by factors based on trend LFS estimates. These factors were applied at the State and Territory, Sex, employment, underemployment, unemployment and residual Not in the Labour Force levels, based on the trend LFS series as published in the March 2019 issue of [Labour Force, Australia \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/67C926C4500A70DACA2583FB00164016?opendocument>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/67C926C4500A70DACA2583FB00164016?opendocument) (cat. no. 6202.0). This adjustment accounts for February seasonality and irregular effects.

13 Historical estimates re-published in this issue from surveys conducted in different survey months (e.g. March, June and September) will be subject to different seasonal impacts, which may result in an observable break in series between the historical data and data collected in PJS. Trend factors have also been applied to these historical estimates to reduce the impact of seasonality on the estimates.

Classifications used

14 Country of birth data are classified according to the [Standard Australian Classification of Countries \(SACC\) \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/5D2485E6F15281E6CA2570B5007ACA80?opendocument>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/5D2485E6F15281E6CA2570B5007ACA80?opendocument) (cat. no. 1269.0).

15 Occupation data are classified according to [ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, Version 1.2 \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1220.0>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1220.0) (cat. no. 1220.0).

16 Industry data are classified according to the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification \(ANZSIC\) \(Revision 2.0\) \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf)

[/mf/1292.0\)](#)(cat. no. 1292.0).

17 Education data are classified according to the [Australian Standard Classification of Education \(ASCED\)](#) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0>) (cat. no. 1272.0).

18 Geography data are classified according to the [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\)](#), (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1270.0.55.001>)(cat. no. 1270.0.55.001).

Comparability of time series

19 The LFS estimates and estimates from the supplementary surveys, (e.g. PJSM) are calculated in such a way as to sum to the independent estimates of the civilian population aged 15 years and over (population benchmarks). Generally, revisions are made to population benchmarks for the LFS following the final rebasing of population estimates to the latest five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. These population benchmarks are updated quarterly based on Estimated Resident Population (ERP) data. However, the estimates from previously published supplementary surveys were not normally revised to reflect the latest benchmarks.

20 From August 2015, Labour Force Estimates have been compiled using population benchmarks based on the most recently available release of ERP data, continually revised on a quarterly basis. At the time of publication, this issue's estimates are comparable with the published labour force estimates for March 2019.

21 From last issue of PJSM (February 2018), the estimates in this publication have moved to regular rebenchmarking to reflect the latest revisions to ERP data and updated trend LFS estimates.

22 Caution should be exercised when comparing results from the 2019 PJSM to earlier issues of PJSM and previously published supplementary surveys as the populations used in each may not be directly comparable. For this reason, results from previous PJSM surveys have been revised and republished in this issue based on the labour force estimates for March 2019.

Comparability with previous surveys

23 Care should be taken when comparing the estimates from PJSM with previous supplementary surveys as Persons Not in the Labour Force (PNILF) and Underemployed Workers (UEW) were previously collected in September, Job Search Experience (JSE) in July, and Labour Mobility (LMOB) was collected in February. Collection of data from the combined PJSM survey was undertaken in February.

Persons Not In the Labour Force

24 PNILF was first conducted in May 1975 and again in May 1977. From 1979 to 1987 the survey was collected twice a year (March and September). From 1988 to 2013 it was conducted annually in September.

25 Results of previous surveys were published in [Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6220.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6220.0) (cat. no. 6220.0); and the standard data service Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6220.0.40.001) for 1994 and 1995 (available in hardcopy only).

26 For more information on the history of changes to PNILF, see the [Explanatory Notes \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6220.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6220.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 6220.0).

Underemployed Workers

27 UEW was conducted in May 1985, 1988 and 1991. In 1994, the survey became an annual survey and until 2013 was collected each September.

28 Results of previous surveys were published in [Underemployed Workers, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6265.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6265.0) (cat. no. 6265.0); and the standard data service Underemployed Workers, Australia (cat. no. 6265.0.40.001) for 1994 and 1995 (available in hardcopy only).

29 For more information on the history of changes to UEW, see the [Explanatory Notes \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6265.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6265.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 6265.0).

Job Search Experience

30 JSE was conducted annually in July from 2002 to 2013. Results of similar surveys on the job search experience of unemployed persons conducted in July 1984, July 1985, June 1986, July 1988, July 1990, June 1991, and annually from July 1992 to July 2001 were published in various issues of [Job Search Experience of Unemployed Persons, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6222.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6222.0) (cat. no. 6222.0).

31 Information on persons who had started work for an employer for wages or salary during the 12 months up to the end of the reference week was collected in June 1986 and two-yearly from July 1990 to July 2000 and was published in [Successful and Unsuccessful Job Search Experience, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6245.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6245.0) (cat. no. 6245.0).

32 For more information on the history of changes to JSE, see the [Explanatory Notes \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6245.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6245.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument)

(<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6222.0Explanatory%20Notes1July%202013?OpenDocument>)(cat. no. 6222.0).

Labour Mobility

33 Labour Mobility and similar surveys were conducted in November 1972, February 1975, February 1976, annually from February 1979 to February 1992 and biennially from February 1994 to February 2012 and most recently in February 2013.

34 Results of previous surveys were published in [Labour Mobility, Australia \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6209.0Main+Features1February%202013?OpenDocument>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6209.0Main+Features1February%202013?OpenDocument)(cat. no. 6209.0).

35 For more information on the history of changes to LMOB, see the [Explanatory Notes \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6209.0Explanatory%20Notes1February%202013?OpenDocument>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6209.0Explanatory%20Notes1February%202013?OpenDocument)(cat. no. 6209.0).

Comparability with monthly LFS statistics

36 Due to differences in the scope, sample size and reference period of this supplementary survey and that of the monthly LFS, the estimation procedure may lead to some small variations between labour force estimates from this survey and those from the LFS.

37 For example, PJSM provides data on the main reason for leaving or losing a person's last job in the previous 12 months, such as retrenchment. PJSM provides a micro analysis understanding of retrenchment dynamics for the Labour Force. To observe the frequency of the number of persons retrenched, users should refer to the Labour Force quarterly retrenchment data (see [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6291.0.55.003>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6291.0.55.003)cat. no. 6291.0.55.003).

38 The ABS underemployment framework uses a threshold (35 hours in the reference week) based on the boundary between full-time and part-time work. This is common to the estimates from both LFS and PJSM.

Products and services

39 A number of Datacubes (spreadsheets) containing all tables produced for this publication are available from the Data downloads section of the publication. The Datacubes present tables of estimates and their corresponding Relative Standard Errors (RSEs).

40 For users who wish to undertake a more detailed analysis of the data, the survey microdata will be released through the TableBuilder product. For more details, refer to the TableBuilder information, [Microdata, Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6226.0.00.001>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6226.0.00.001)(cat. no. 6226.0.00.001). For

more information see [About TableBuilder \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/About+TableBuilder>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/About+TableBuilder).

41 Special tabulations are available on request. Subject to confidentiality and sampling variability constraints, tabulations can be produced from the survey incorporating data items, populations and geographic area selections to meet individual requirements. These will be provided in electronic form. All enquiries should be made to the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

Next survey

42 This survey is to be conducted next in February 2020.

Acknowledgement

43 ABS surveys draw extensively on information provided freely by individuals, businesses, governments and other organisations. Their continued cooperation is very much appreciated: without it, the wide range of statistics published by the ABS would not be available. Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the Census and Statistics Act, 1905.

Related publications

44 Current publications and other products released by the ABS are available from the [Statistics Page \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/browse?opendocument&ref=topBar>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/browse?opendocument&ref=topBar) on the ABS website. The ABS also issues a daily [Release Advice \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/webpages/Upcoming+releases>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/webpages/Upcoming+releases) on the website which details products to be released in the week ahead.

Technical note - data quality

Reliability of the estimates

1 The estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from a sample survey. Any data collection may encounter factors, known as non-sampling error, which can impact on the reliability of the resulting statistics. In addition, the reliability of estimates based on sample surveys are also subject to sampling variability. That is, the estimates may differ from those that would have been produced had all persons in the population been included in the survey.

Non-sampling error

2 Non-sampling error may occur in any collection, whether it is based on a sample or a full

count such as a census. Sources of non-sampling error include non-response, errors in reporting by respondents or recording of answers by interviewers and errors in coding and processing data. Every effort is made to reduce non-sampling error by careful design and testing of questionnaires, training and supervision of interviewers, and extensive editing and quality control procedures at all stages of data processing.

Sampling error

3 Sampling error is the difference between the published estimates, derived from a sample of persons, and the value that would have been produced if the total population (as defined by the scope of the survey) had been included in the survey. One measure of the sampling error is given by the standard error (SE), which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of persons was included. There are about two chances in three (67%) that a sample estimate will differ by less than one SE from the number that would have been obtained if all persons had been surveyed, and about 19 chances in 20 (95%) that the difference will be less than two SEs.

4 Another measure of the likely difference is the relative standard error (RSE), which is obtained by expressing the SE as a percentage of the estimate.

$$RSE\% = \left(\frac{SE}{estimate} \right) \times 100$$

5 RSEs for count estimates have been calculated using the Jackknife method of variance estimation. This involves the calculation of 30 'replicate' estimates based on 30 different subsamples of the obtained sample. The variability of estimates obtained from these subsamples is used to estimate the sample variability surrounding the count estimate.

6 The Excel spreadsheets in the Data downloads section contain all the tables produced for this release and the calculated RSEs for each of the estimates.

7 Only estimates (numbers or percentages) with RSEs less than 25% are considered sufficiently reliable for most analytical purposes. However, estimates with larger RSEs have been included. Estimates with an RSE in the range 25% to 50% should be used with caution while estimates with RSEs greater than 50% are considered too unreliable for general use. All cells in the Excel spreadsheets with RSEs greater than 25% contain a comment indicating the size of the RSE. These cells can be identified by a red indicator in the corner of the cell. The comment appears when the mouse pointer hovers over the cell.

8 Another measure is the Margin of Error (MOE), which shows the largest possible difference that could be between the estimate due to sampling error and what would have been

produced had all persons been included in the survey with a given level of confidence. It is useful for understanding and comparing the accuracy of proportion estimates.

9 Where provided, MOEs for estimates are calculated at the 95% confidence level. At this level, there are 19 chances in 20 that the estimate will differ from the population value by less than the provided MOE. The 95% MOE is obtained by multiplying the SE by 1.96.

$$MOE = SE \times 1.96$$

Calculation of standard error

10 Standard errors can be calculated using the estimates (counts or percentages) and the corresponding RSEs. See [What is a Standard Error and Relative Standard Error, Reliability of estimates for Labour Force data \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/Home/What+is+a+Standard+Error+and+Relative+Standard+Error,+Reliability+of+estimates+for+Labour+Force+data>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/Home/What+is+a+Standard+Error+and+Relative+Standard+Error,+Reliability+of+estimates+for+Labour+Force+data) for more details.

Proportions and percentages

11 Proportions and percentages formed from the ratio of two estimates are also subject to sampling errors. The size of the error depends on the accuracy of both the numerator and the denominator. A formula to approximate the RSE of a proportion is given below. This formula is only valid when x is a subset of y:

$$RSE\left(\frac{x}{y}\right) \approx \sqrt{[RSE(x)]^2 - [RSE(y)]^2}$$

Differences

12 The difference between two survey estimates (counts or percentages) can also be calculated from published estimates. Such an estimate is also subject to sampling error. The sampling error of the difference between two estimates depends on their SEs and the relationship (correlation) between them. An approximate SE of the difference between two estimates (x-y) may be calculated by the following formula:

$$SE(x - y) \approx \sqrt{[SE(x)]^2 + [SE(y)]^2}$$

13 While this formula will only be exact for differences between separate and uncorrelated characteristics or sub populations, it provides a good approximation for the differences likely to be of interest in this publication.

Significance testing

14 A statistical significance test for a comparison between estimates can be performed to determine whether it is likely that there is a difference between the corresponding population characteristics. The SE of the difference between two corresponding estimates (x and y) can be calculated using the formula shown above in the Differences section. This SE is then used to calculate the following test statistic:

$$\left(\frac{x-y}{SE(x-y)} \right)$$

15 If the value of this test statistic is greater than 1.96 then there is evidence, with a 95% level of confidence, of a statistically significant difference in the two populations with respect to that characteristic. Otherwise, it cannot be stated with confidence that there is a real difference between the populations with respect to that characteristic.

Glossary

Show all

Actively looking for work

Persons who were taking active steps to find work. Active steps comprise:

- Wrote, phoned or applied in person to an employer for work
- Answered an advertisement for a job on the Internet, in a newspaper or on noticeboards
- Had an interview with an employer
- Contacted friends or relatives
- Took steps to purchase or start up own business
- Advertised or tendered for work
- Registered with a jobactive Australia provider
- Registered with other employment agency.

Age of youngest child

Age of the youngest child, 15 years and under, in the household.

Available to start work

Refers to employed or unemployed persons who were available to start work or more hours either in the reference week, or in the four weeks subsequent to the interview.

Available to start work within four weeks

Persons who were available to start work within four weeks or, for persons with children

aged 12 years and under, could start work within four weeks suitable child care was available.

Change in work

Employees were considered to have had some change in work if they had been with their current employer for one year or more at February 2019 and reported that, in the 12 months to February 2019, they had:

- been promoted;
- transferred to a different position;
- changed usual hours worked; or
- changed occupation.

Contributing family workers

Persons who work without pay in an economic enterprise operated by a relative.

Did not want to work

Persons who were not classified as employed or unemployed who answered 'no' when asked if they would like a job.

Discouraged job seekers

Persons with marginal attachment to the labour force who did not have a job to go to, or return to, wanted to work and were available to start work within the next four weeks but whose main reason for not actively looking for work was that they believed they would not find a job for any of the following reasons:

- considered to be too young or too old by employers;
- believes ill health or disability discourages employers;
- lacked necessary schooling, training, skills or experience;
- difficulties because of language or ethnic background;
- no jobs in their locality or line of work;
- no jobs in suitable hours; and
- no jobs at all.

Duration of current period of insufficient work

For full-time workers who worked fewer than 35 hours in the reference week due to economic reasons, refers to the number of weeks they have been working fewer than 35 hours a week.

For part-time workers who would prefer to work more hours, refers to the number of weeks

they have wanted to work more hours.

As periods of insufficient work are recorded in full weeks and rounded down, this results in a slight understatement of duration.

Duration of current period of unemployment

The period of time from when an unemployed person began looking for work until the end of the reference week; or the period of time since an unemployed person last worked in any job for two weeks or more until the end of the reference week; whichever was the shorter period. Brief periods of work (of less than two weeks) since the person began looking for work are disregarded.

Duration of looking for work before current job

The number of weeks or years that employed persons were looking for work before being offered their current job or starting their own business. For employed persons who had worked before, it includes any time they were looking for work before leaving their previous employer.

Economic reasons

Economic reasons for full-time workers having worked fewer than 35 hours in the reference week are:

- there was no work or not enough work available, e.g. due to material shortages; or
- they were stood down.

Employed persons

Persons aged 15 years and over who, during the reference week:

- worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, in a job or business or on a farm (comprising employees, employers and own account workers); or
- worked for one hour or more without pay in a family business or on a farm (i.e. contributing family workers); or
- were employees who had a job but were not at work and were:
 - away from work for less than four weeks up to the end of the reference week;
 - away from work for more than four weeks up to the end of the reference week and received pay for some or all of the four week period to the end of the reference week;
 - away from work as a standard work or shift arrangement;
 - on strike or locked out;
 - on workers' compensation and expected to return to their job; or
- were employers or own account workers who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work.

Employees

An employed person who does not operate their own incorporated or unincorporated enterprise. An employee works for a public or private employer and receives remuneration in wages, salary, on a commission basis (with or without a retainer), tips, piece-rates, or payment in kind.

Family

Two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering; and who are usually resident in the same household. The basis of a family is formed by identifying the presence of a couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other blood relationship. Some households will, therefore, contain more than one family.

Family reasons for not actively looking for work

Includes ill health of someone other than themselves, caring for children and other family considerations.

First job ever held lasting two weeks or more

Refers to employees (excluding Owner Managers of Incorporated Enterprises (OMIES)) who had never worked for two weeks or more before starting their current job.

Full-time preference

Persons who preferred to work 35 hours or more a week.

Full-time or part-time status of last job

The perception of persons of whether they worked full-time or part-time in their last job.

Full-time workers

Employed persons who usually worked 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs) and others who, although usually working fewer than 35 hours a week, worked 35 hours or more during the reference week.

Future starters

Persons waiting to start, within four weeks of the end of the reference week, a new job that they have already obtained (and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available then). Under International Labour Organisation (ILO) guidelines, these persons do not have to be actively looking for work to be classified as unemployed.

Had a job to go or return to

Persons who were waiting to start a job, but would not be starting within four weeks. Also includes persons who had a job but, up to the end of the reference week, had been away from work without pay for four weeks or longer and had not been actively looking for work.

Had worked before

Refers to employees (excluding OMIEs) who had worked before and were either out of work or changed their employer before starting their current job.

Industry

An industry is a group of businesses or organisations that undertake similar economic activities to produce goods and/or services. In this publication, industry refers to ANSIC Division as classified according to the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification \(ANZSIC\), \(Revision 2.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0>) (cat. no. 1292.0).

Intention to enter the labour force in the next 12 months

The intention of persons to work or look for work in the 12 months following the interview.

Interstate

Refers to whether persons were prepared to move to another state or territory if offered a suitable job.

Intrastate

Refers to whether persons were prepared to move to another part of their state or territory if offered a suitable job.

Job

Any paid employment, full-time or part-time, lasting two weeks or more.

Job starters

Employed persons who started their current job in the previous 12 months.

Labour force

The civilian population is split into two mutually exclusive groups: the labour force (employed and unemployed persons) and persons not in the labour force. The definitions conform closely to the international standard definitions adopted by the International Conferences of Labour Statisticians.

Left a job

Persons who are classified as voluntarily ceasing their last job.

Level of highest educational attainment

Level of highest educational attainment identifies the highest achievement a person has attained in any area of study. It is not a measurement of the relative importance of different fields of study but a ranking of qualifications and other educational attainments regardless of the particular area of study or the type of institution in which the study was undertaken. It is categorised according to the [Australian Standard Classification of Education \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0) (cat. no. 1272.0) Level of education classification.

Level of highest non-school qualification

A person's level of highest non-school qualification is the highest qualification a person has attained in any area of formal study other than school study. It is categorised according to the [Australian Standard Classification of Education \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0) (cat. no. 1272.0) Level of education classification.

Long-term underemployed

Persons whose duration of current period of insufficient work is 12 months or more.

Long-term unemployed

Persons whose duration of current period of unemployment is 12 months or more.

Looking for work with more hours

Looked for work with more hours at some time during the four weeks up to the end of the reference week.

Lost a job

Persons who have worked for two weeks or more in the past two years and who left that job involuntarily.

Main activity when not in the labour force

The main activity of persons who are not in the labour force since they last worked or looked for work (or in the last 12 months if they haven't worked in the last year).

Main difficulty in finding work

The self reported main difficulty in finding work experienced during the current period of

unemployment.

Main job

The job in which most hours are usually worked.

Marginal attachment to the labour force

Persons who were not in the labour force in the reference week, wanted to work and:

- were actively looking for work but did not meet the availability criterion to be classified as unemployed; or
- were not actively looking for work but were available to start work within four weeks; or
- were waiting to start a new job already obtained and persons who had been away from work without pay for four weeks or longer and had not been actively looking for work.

The criteria for determining those in the labour force are based on activity (i.e. working or looking for work) and availability to start work during the reference week. The criteria associated with marginal attachment to the labour force, in particular the concepts of wanting to work and reasons for not actively looking for work, are more subjective. Hence, the measurement against these criteria is affected by the respondent's own interpretation of the concepts used. An individual respondent's interpretation may be affected by their work aspirations, as well as family, economic and other commitments.

For more information see article [Understanding the Australian Labour Force Using ABS Statistics \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6202.0main+features999Dec%202013\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6202.0main+features999Dec%202013) in [Labour Force, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/6202.0Main%20Features1Dec%202013?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=6202.0&issue=Dec%202013&num=&view=_\(6202.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/6202.0Main%20Features1Dec%202013?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=6202.0&issue=Dec%202013&num=&view=_(6202.0)).

Non-economic reasons

Non-economic reasons for full-time workers having worked fewer than 35 hours in the reference week include:

- Annual leave, holidays, flexitime, or long service leave
- Own illness, injury or sick leave
- Standard work arrangements or shift work
- Personal reasons, studying, caring for sick or injured family members
- Maternity, paternity or parental leave
- Bad weather or plant breakdown
- On strike, locked out, or industrial dispute
- End of seasonal work.

Not available to start work

Refers to persons who were not available to start work with more hours either in the reference week, or in the four weeks following the interview.

Not fully employed

Persons who are not fully employed comprise part-time workers who would prefer to work more hours, and full-time workers who worked part-time hours in the reference week for economic reasons.

Number of offers of employment

The number of separate offers of employment received during the current period of unemployment.

Occupation

An occupation is a collection of jobs that are sufficiently similar in their title and tasks, skill level and skill specialisation which are grouped together for the purposes of classification. In this publication, occupation refers to Major Group and Sub-Major Group as defined by [ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, Version 1.2](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1220.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1220.0>) (cat. no. 1220.0).

Owner managers of incorporated enterprises (OMIEs)

Persons who work in their own incorporated enterprise, that is, a business entity which is registered as a separate legal entity to its members or owners (also known as a limited liability company). These persons are sometimes classified as employees. They can work alone or in a business with employees.

Owner managers of unincorporated enterprises (OMUEs)

Persons who operate their own unincorporated enterprise, that is, a business entity in which the owner and the business are legally inseparable, so that the owner is liable for any business debts that are incurred. Includes those engaged independently in a trade or profession. They can work alone or in a business with employees.

Part-time preference

Persons who preferred to work one to 34 hours a week.

Part-time workers

Employed persons who usually worked fewer than 35 hours a week (in all jobs) and either did so during the reference week, or were not at work during the reference week.

Personal reasons for not actively looking for work¹

Persons with personal reasons for not actively looking for work include:

- Own short-term illness or injury
- Own long-term health condition or disability
- Attending an educational institution
- Had no need or want to work
- Fully occupied with voluntary work
- Problems with access to transport
- Moved house or holidays.

Persons not in the labour force

Persons not in the labour force can be divided into those who are marginally attached to the labour force, and those who are not. Persons who are marginally attached to the labour force satisfy some, but not all, of the criteria required to be classified as unemployed.

Persons not in the labour force are considered to be marginally attached to the labour force if they:

- wanted to work and were actively looking for work (but, unlike unemployed persons, were not available to start work in the reference week); or
- wanted to work and were not actively looking for work but were available to start work within four weeks.
- were waiting to start a new job already obtained and persons who had been away from work without pay for four weeks or longer and had not been actively looking for work.

Persons not in the labour force are not marginally attached to the labour force if they:

- did not want to work; or
- wanted to work but were not actively looking for work and were not available to start work within four weeks.

Preferred number of hours

The number of hours unemployed persons would like to work each week.

Preferred number of extra hours

The number of extra hours a week an underemployed worker would have preferred to work.

Preferred total number of hours

The total number of hours per week an underemployed worker would prefer to work.

Reasons for turning down job offers¹

Classifies reasons for turning down job offers in current period of unemployment according to the following categories:

- Unsuitable Job Conditions
 - Unsatisfactory pay or conditions
 - Not in locality or line of work
 - Hours unsuitable
 - Unwilling to move state or city
 - Too far to travel
- Personal reasons
 - Own short-term illness or injury
 - Own long-term health condition or disability
 - Pregnancy
 - Welfare or pension payments may be affected
 - Returned to study
- Family reasons
 - Childcare
 - Caring for an ill or elderly person or family member
- Other
 - Waiting to start another job or starting a new business
 - Other reasons
 - Did not know.

Skill level of occupation

An occupation is a collection of jobs that are sufficiently similar in their title and tasks, skill level and skill specialisation which are grouped together for the purposes of classification. In this publication, skill level of occupation refers to the skill levels defined for each occupation in the [ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, Version 1.2 \(<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1220.0>\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1220.0) (cat. no. 1220.0).

Status of employment

Classifies employed persons according to the following categories on the basis of their current job:

- Employees
 - with paid leave entitlements
 - without paid leave entitlements

- Owner managers of incorporated enterprises
 - with employees
 - without employees
- Owner managers of unincorporated enterprises
 - with employees
 - without employees
- Contributing family workers.

Stood down

Persons who are in a situation where an employer is unable to provide useful work for its employees, for a particular period of time, for circumstances beyond its control.

Suitable job

A suitable job is:

- any job for which the person is qualified (if applicable), is capable of performing and which provides adequate job conditions (including pay, hours, travel to work, etc.).
- a job that would be accepted by the person irrespective of whether a move was required.

Time since last job

The elapsed time since ceasing the last job.

Underemployed workers

Underemployed workers are employed persons who would prefer, and are available for, more hours of work than they currently have. They comprise:

- part-time workers who would prefer to work more hours and were available to start work with more hours, either in the reference week or in the four weeks subsequent to the survey; and
- full-time workers who worked part-time hours in the reference week for economic reasons (such as being stood down or insufficient work being available). It is assumed that these persons would prefer to work full time in the reference week and would have been available to do so.

Unemployed

Persons aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the reference week, and:

- had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week and were available for work in the reference week; or

- were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week, and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available then.

Usual number of hours

The number of hours usually worked in a week.

Wanted to work

Persons not in the labour force who were not actively looking for work who answered 'yes' or 'maybe' when asked if they would like a job, as well as those persons not in the labour force who were actively looking. It is assumed those persons actively looking want a job.

With paid leave entitlements

The entitlement of employees to either paid holiday leave or paid sick leave (or both) in their current job. Persons employed in their own business or who were contributing family workers were not asked questions about paid leave entitlements.

Without paid leave entitlements

Employees who were not entitled to, or did not know whether they were entitled to, paid holiday leave and paid sick leave in their current job.

End note

1. Reasons provided by respondents in this item are not mutually exclusive categories.

Quality declaration - summary

Institutional environment

For information on the institutional environment of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), including the legislative obligations of the ABS, financing and governance arrangements, and mechanisms for scrutiny of ABS operations, please see [ABS Institutional Environment](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/4a256353001af3ed4b2562bb00121564/10ca14cb967e5b83ca2573ae00197b65!OpenDocument) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/4a256353001af3ed4b2562bb00121564/10ca14cb967e5b83ca2573ae00197b65!OpenDocument>).

Relevance

The Participation, Job Search and Mobility (PJS) survey presents information about participation, underemployment, marginal attachment, job mobility and job search. The

collection of a range of socio-demographic and labour force characteristics makes the datasets produced from the survey extremely valuable for comparing and analysing a person's experience relating to job search, job change and increasing participation, all of which can be cross classified by other employment characteristics such as hours worked, industry, occupation and sector of job as well as personal characteristics.

Timeliness

The Participation, Job Search and Mobility survey was conducted in February 2019 as a supplement to the ABS monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS). Results from this survey are released in the publication *Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia* (cat. no. 6226.0).

Accuracy

Estimates from the PJSM are subject to sampling and non-sampling errors. Relative standard error (RSE) is a measure of the size of the sampling error affecting an estimate, i.e. the error introduced by basing estimates on a sample of the population rather than the full population. Non-sampling errors are inaccuracies that occur due to imperfections in reporting by respondents and interviewers, and errors made in coding and processing data.

This publication was designed primarily to provide estimates at the Australia level. Broad estimates are available for state/territory and/or capital city/balance of state, though users should exercise caution when using estimates at this level because of the presence of high sampling errors. Relative Standard Errors for all estimates are available in the relevant Data Cube. More information on Standard Errors is available in the Technical Note of this release.

For further information regarding the accuracy of the PJSM survey estimates see the Technical Note.

Coherence

This survey will inform on the following broad labour market issues - Labour force participation potential, underemployment and marginal attachment, as well as job search experience and labour mobility. This information can be cross classified by characteristics such as duration of job search, last job details, hours worked, industry and occupation as well as personal characteristics.

Care should be taken when comparing the estimates from 2019 PJSM survey with previous years topics as Persons Not In The Labour Force (PNILF) and Underemployed Workers (UEW)

were previously collected in September, Job Search Experience (JSE) in July and Labour Mobility (LMOB) was collected in February. Collection of data from this combined survey was undertaken in February. The populations used in each may not be directly comparable.

- For more information on the history of changes to PNILF, see the [Explanatory Notes](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6220.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 6220.0).
- For more information on the history of changes to UEW, see the [Explanatory Notes](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6265.0Explanatory%20Notes1September%202013?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 6265.0).
- For more information on the history of changes to JSE, see the [Explanatory Notes](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6222.0Explanatory%20Notes1July%202013?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 6222.0).
- For more information on the history of changes to LMOB, see the [Explanatory Notes](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6209.0Explanatory%20Notes1February%202013?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 6209.0).

Interpretability

Contained within PJSM are Data Cubes with footnoted data to aid interpretation of the results of the survey, detailed Explanatory Notes, a Technical Note and a Glossary are also included providing information on the terminology, classifications and other technical aspects associated with these statistics.

Further commentary is often available through articles and data published in other ABS products, including:

- [Concepts, Sources and Methods](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/B67163F76A9C2F4ECA257B63002928D0?opendocument) (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001).

Data access

Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia (cat. no. 6226.0) is released electronically via the ABS website as Data Cubes in spreadsheet format. Additional data may be available on request (subject to data quality). Note that detailed data can be subject to high relative standard errors. Full details of data items for this survey are available from the Data downloads section in Data Cube: PJSM 2019 Populations and Data items list.

For users who wish to undertake a more detailed analysis of the data, the survey microdata will be released through the TableBuilder product. For more details, refer to the TableBuilder information, Microdata, Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia (cat. no. 6226.0.00.001). For more information see [About TableBuilder](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/About+TableBuilder) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/About+TableBuilder>).

For more information about ABS data available on request, contact National Information and Referral Service in Canberra on 1300 135 070 or via email to client.services@abs.gov.au (<mailto:client.services@abs.gov.au>).